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INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9861
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000547

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2016
TAGS: [KISL](#) [OVIP](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [SCUL](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: DEOBANDI MUSLIMS RENOUNCE THEIR LEADER'S
ANTI-AMERICAN REMARKS

REF: NEW DELHI 369

NEW DELHI 00000547 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DCM Bob Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: On January 23, three Maulanas from the influential seminary at Deoband called on Poloff, renounced the anti-American statements made by Mahmood Madni, the General Secretary of the Jamiatul Ulema-e-Hind - JUH (the political arm of Deobandi Islam) and distanced themselves from calls for anti-American demonstrations during the upcoming presidential visit. Although their statements were self-serving, they indicate that Indian Muslims are keeping their distance from anti-Americanism. End Summary.

12. (U) On January 19, Mahmood Madni, the General Secretary of the Jamiatul Ulema-e-Hind - JUH (the political arm of Deobandi Islam), held a news conference to condemn the upcoming visit of President Bush to India. Characterizing the President as "challenge to the peace-loving people of India, Madni accused him of "destroying Afghanistan and Iraq without any reasonable cause," and told Muslims that they had a "duty" to "express their disapproval of his visit." Madni announced that he was sponsoring a meeting of "peace loving political, social and cultural organizations," on February 2 to form the nucleus for a "Bush Go Back" campaign.

13. (C) On January 23, three maulanas from the Deoband Seminary, the center of Deobandi Islam, met with Poloff. They renounced Madni's remarks, saying the everyone at the seminary was surprised by his call to arms. According to the Maulvis, Madni did not consult with the Deoband leadership before unilaterally calling his press conference. They brought a request from Madni to meet with Poloff to spell out

his position on the Bush visit. They were told that no meeting can take place until Madni publicly retracts his remarks and calls-off planned demonstrations. Poloff pointed out that the JUH supports Congress and the UPA government and should not embarrass the GOI by working at cross-purposes. The maulvis responded that they were themselves angry at Madni's actions and planned to issue a public statement condemning his anti-American remarks and disassociating the Deoband Madrassa from the call for demonstrations.

¶4. (C) When asked about the recent statement of Osama bin Ladin calling for a "truce" with the US and the demonstrations in Pakistan protesting an alleged US missile attack on a Pakistani village, the Maulvis claimed that most Indian deobandis have no interest in Al Qaeda and believe Osama bin Ladin to be dead. They elaborated that for most Indian Muslims, the recent events in Pakistan and the statements of Osama bin Ladin and other Al Qaeda leaders are "too confusing," and they cannot really follow what Al Qaeda is trying to say. They maintained that the JUH and Indian Deobandis strongly support Congress and deeply admire Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh and concur with the GOI's condemnation of terrorism and expressed desire for friendly relations with the US.

Comment - Keeping a Safe Distance

¶5. (C) The Deobandis, despite their historic affiliation with the Congress Party, are the most political and most anti-American of India's Muslim sects. India's Shias have been outspokenly pro-American, while the Sufis and Barelvis stay away from politics and are largely friendly to the US. The statements by the Deobandi Maulvis were meant for USG

NEW DELHI 00000547 002.2 OF 002

consumption, and in this regard were self-serving. Despite this, they indicate that even among the Deobandis knee-jerk anti-Americanism is no longer popular and has become a hard sell.

¶6. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)
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